

How to play the **HARMONICA**

by
WILL VAN ALLEN



A COMPREHENSIVE METHOD
SHOWING HOW TO HOLD
AND PLAY THE INSTRUMENT
WITH THREE-NOTE ACCOM-
PANIMENT, TREMOLO, ETC.,
AND INCLUDING A SELEC-
TION OF PIECES.

2/6

Net

Paxton's "Lightning" Harmonica Method

FOREWORD

The Harmonica is a delightful and useful little musical instrument, giving the ear a musical training in simple form.

There have been a number of attempts to teach the Harmonica by so-called simple systems of just Blow and Draw, but I believe this is the first instructor to teach the playing of the Harmonica from Musical notation and with accompaniment chords.

The idea of writing the music with the stem up (♩) for *notes to be blown*, and with the stem down (♮) for *notes to be drawn*, has not been used before, and it is claimed that this method teaches the pupil to read music much quicker and easier than any other method for the Harmonica. *WILL VANALLEN*

RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC

Music for the Harmonica is written upon a series of five lines and four spaces called a Stave. These lines and spaces are reckoned upwards, and named from the first seven letters of the alphabet, the eighth letter being a repetition of the first, thus forming an octave.

A character called the Treble Clef (♩) is used at the commencement of each stave. Characters called Notes show the length of the sounds, and are named from the lines and spaces on or in which they are found, *e.g.*,

TREBLE CLEF

Notes on Lines
E G B D F

Notes in Spaces
F A C E

Still higher or lower sounds are represented by notes written upon short lines called Leger Lines:—

G A B C
D C B A G F E

The sounds in the above diagrams are called naturals, and are to be found on the standard 10 hole 'Vamper' harmonica. On the*Chromatic Harmonica, other sounds, a semitone between each tone, can be produced by means of a slide worked from the end of the instrument. These are called sharps and flats. A sharp (♯) represents a sound a semitone higher than a natural; a flat (♭), a sound a semitone lower; a double sharp (×), two semitones higher; a double flat (♭♭), two semitones lower. The natural (♮) restores a note to its original pitch.

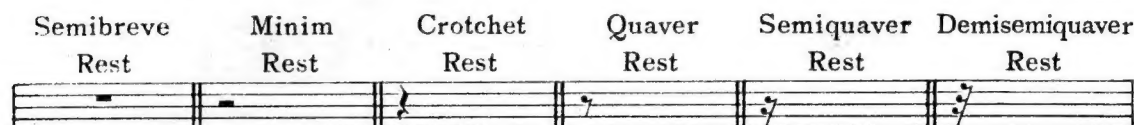
The notes in general use, and their values, are as follows:— The Semibreve (♩), the Minim (♩), the Crotchet (♩), the Quaver (♩), the Semiquaver (♩), and the Demisemiquaver (♩). Regarding the semibreve as the standard, or whole note, each following note is a half of the one preceding it or double the one following it. Thus a semibreve is worth two minims; a minim, two crotchets; a crotchet, two quavers; and so on. When two or more quavers, or shorter notes, occur in succession they are generally grouped together, *e.g.*, , &c.

* See "How to Play the Chromatic Harmonica," Price 1/6

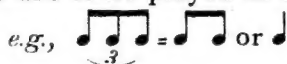
A Dot placed after a note makes the latter half as long again. Thus ♩ is equal to $\text{♩} \cdot$ or $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, and so on. In other words, a dotted note is worth three of the variety next below it.

A Pause over or under a note or Rest signifies that such signs should be lengthened beyond their proper value:— $\text{♩} \text{ } \text{̣}$

Silence in music is denoted by signs called Rests. These correspond to the notes in value and are named accordingly:—



The figure 3 and a curved line covering three notes of the same value, or their equivalents, denote that three notes are to be played in the time of two of the same kind,



Music is divided into equal portions, or Measures, by upright lines drawn across the stave and termed Bars:—

The Double Bar at the end of the above example shows the end of a Movement. Dots on either side of a double bar indicate that the music is to be repeated.

The value of each measure is shown by two figures placed after the clef, at the commencement of a movement, and called a Time Signature. The most common Time Signatures are:— $\frac{2}{4}$ having 2 crotchets in a measure; $\frac{3}{4}$ having 3 crotchets; and $\frac{4}{4}$ having 4 crotchets; $\frac{6}{8}$ having 2 dotted crotchets or 6 quavers; $\frac{9}{8}$ having 3 dotted crotchets or 9 quavers; $\frac{12}{8}$ having 4 dotted crotchets or 12 quavers.

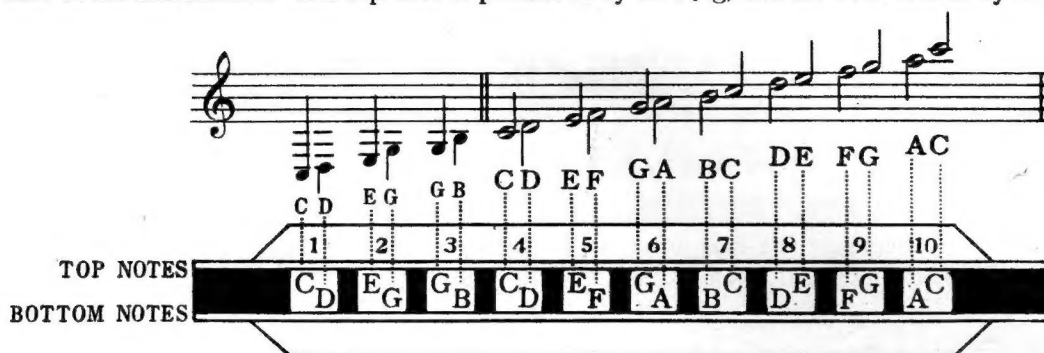
Speed and Expression in music are denoted by certain Italian words of which the following are the most common:—

Piano (*p*), soft; *Pianissimo* (*pp*), very soft; *Mezzo piano* (*mp*), moderately soft; *Mezzo forte* (*mf*), moderately loud; *Forte* (*f*), loud; *Fortissimo* (*ff*), very loud; *diminuendo* (*dim.*), gradually softer; *crescendo* (*cres.*), gradually louder; *rallentando* (*rall.*), gradually slower; *ritardando* (*rit.*), gradually slower; *accelerando* (*accel.*), gradually quicker; *sforzato* (*sf*), forced, accented; *grave*, very slow; *lento*, slow; *adagio*, leisurely; *andante*, going, moving; *moderato*, moderate time; *Allegretto*, rather quick; *Allegro*, merry, lively; *a tempo*, in time; *cantabile*, singing; *dolce*, sweet; *grazioso*, gracefully; *marcato*, marked; *meno*, less; *molto*, much or very; *mosso*, moved, animated; *moto*, movement; *poco*, a little; *poco a poco*, little by little; *simile*, in like manner.

(Further and fuller information concerning the elements of music should be obtained from Mansfield's *Rudiments of Music*, W. Paxton & Co., Ltd., Price 2/6; cloth, 3/6.)

THE NOTES OF THE HARMONICA

The following diagram shows the notes that are placed opposite each other in the frame of the Harmonica. The top note is produced by *blowing*, and the bottom note by *drawing*.

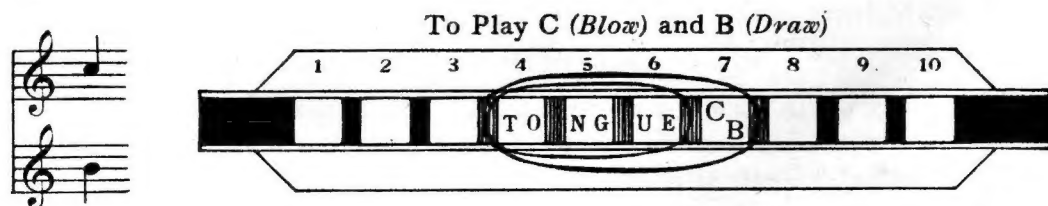
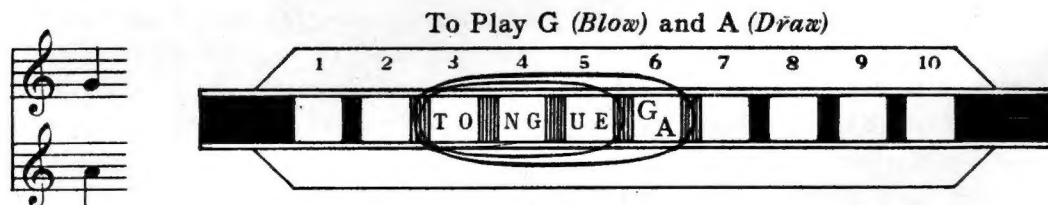
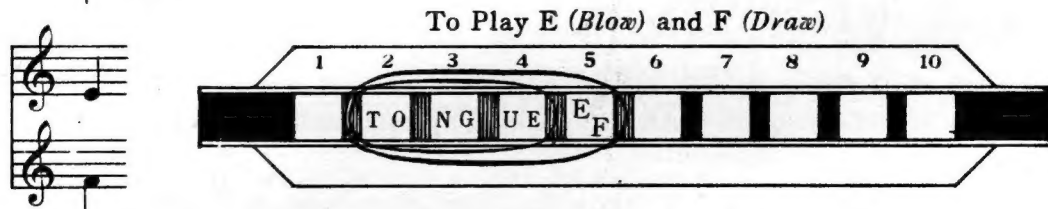
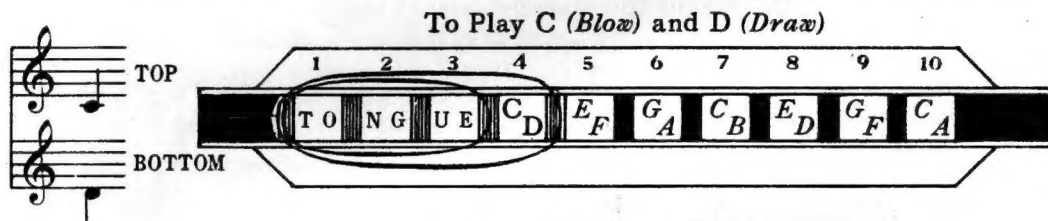


It is only necessary to learn the notes and their positions from the 4th to 10th spaces.

Note that the notes with the stems up (\uparrow) are on the top row (*blow*); and the notes with the stems down (\downarrow) are on the bottom row (*draw*).

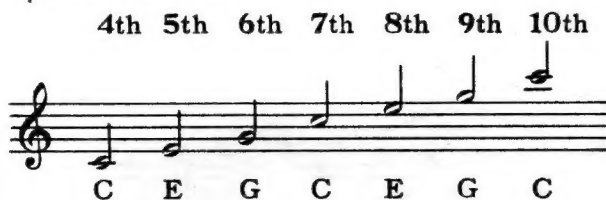
DIAGRAMS SHOWING POSITION OF LIPS AND TONGUE

The large outside circle represents the lips. The small circle represents the tongue covering 3 holes of the Harmonica, leaving the 4th hole open and free for sound.

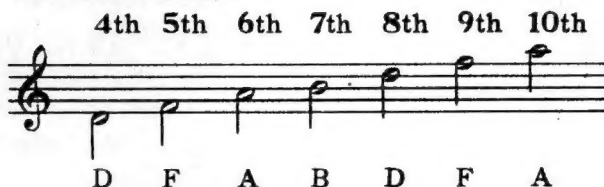


The notes to Blow.

(4th to 10th holes)



The notes to Draw.



Note: The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd holes are used only for accompaniments. Notice that the notes in the 2nd and 3rd holes are not consecutive, also that the 7th note B is missing in the top octave. This is done to make the instrument practical.

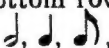
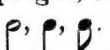
HOW TO HOLD THE HARMONICA

Keep the lower notes to the left. Hold the instrument with the thumb at one end and the first part of the second finger at the other end. All the fingers should lightly touch one another in a row. The back part of the instrument can touch the hand near the bottom joint of the first finger. Use left or right hand.

HOW TO PLAY THE HARMONICA

There are several kinds of Harmonicas in use: the single reed harmonica; the double reed harmonica; and the*chromatic harmonica. See page 2.

The most popular is the single reed instrument called The Vamper, with which you can play the melody and a three note-accompaniment at the same time. The standard 'Vamper' has 10 holes with 20 reeds. 10 reeds are placed along the *top* of the frame, and give the notes that sound when you *blow* into the instrument. 10 reeds are also placed along the *bottom* of the frame, and give the notes that sound when you *draw* the breath through the instrument. There are, therefore, two notes to each hole.

In order to distinguish the top row of notes from the bottom row, the top notes (blow notes) are written with the stem of the note upright, thus , etc., and the bottom notes (draw notes) with the stems down, thus .

Students will find this method a great help in reading the music correctly.

Note: Be sure to tap the moisture out of the harmonica after you have stopped playing. Also keep it covered up to avoid dust and dirt getting into the reeds. A little dust or fluff at the end of a reed will prevent the reed from vibrating.

* See "How to Play the Chromatic Harmonica," Price 1/6

THE SCALE OF C



Notice that the notes to blow are C, E and G only, and the notes to draw are D, F, A and B.

Hold the Harmonica with the lowest (Bass) notes to the left.

The student should now take a piece of stiff paper and cover the front of the harmonica. Punch a hole in the paper the size of one of the holes in the instrument, and place the hole in the paper over the 4th hole of the harmonica, *blowing* softly the note C, the first note in the scale. Then *draw* the note D in the same hole. Now, place the hole over the 5th hole, and *blow* E and *draw* F; move to the 6th hole, *blow* G and *draw* A; move to the 7th hole, *draw* B and *blow* C. You have now played the scale of C, which should be practised until you can play clean and distinguish the notes.

THE SCALE OF C IN CHORDS

Now take a piece of stiff paper and cover all the holes, except the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Place your lips well over the harmonica. Blow softly and play the four notes together, then draw and play the four notes. Move the cover back and uncover the 5th hole; then blow and draw the notes in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th holes. Move along and uncover the 6th hole, then the 7th to complete the scale. When you can play the notes distinctly you can discard the paper cover. Now learn to use the tongue in place of the paper cover.

Place the Harmonica in the right side of the mouth to cover the first 4 holes. Then place the tongue over the first 3 holes, leaving the 4th hole open. When you *blow* you will only sound one note, which will be C in the 4th hole. Keep the same position and *draw* one note, which will be D in the 4th hole. Now move the Harmonica slightly to the left, covering the 2nd, 3rd and 4th holes with the tongue, leaving the 5th hole open. *Blow* and you will sound E; *Draw* and you will sound F. Now complete the octave to the 7th hole — B (*draw*) and C (*blow*).

Remember— The mouth covers 4 holes of the Harmonica, the tongue covers 3 holes of the Harmonica. Only one note (the highest) will sound when the tongue is on the Harmonica and you blow through the right corner or side of the mouth. Four notes will sound when you take the tongue off the instrument. Practise until you can play the single notes with ease.

HOW TO PRODUCE THE TREMOLO

Playing with two hands

There are several ways of holding the harmonica when playing 'Tremolo', but the best way is to place one end of the harmonica (low note end) in the middle joint of the thumb of the left hand, and the other end between the 2nd and 3rd joints of the 2nd finger of the right hand. The right hand should be straight up with the fingers slightly bent forward. Now bring the fingers of the left hand to meet the same fingers of the right hand (the two little fingers and the sides of the hands should come quite close together) so that when the harmonica is placed in the mouth it is almost concealed, and a sort of air chamber is created. Now, by opening and closing the left hand quickly in a vibrating manner, a most delightful Tremolo is produced.

THE POSITIONS OF THE HANDS FOR THE TREMOLO



OPEN



CLOSED

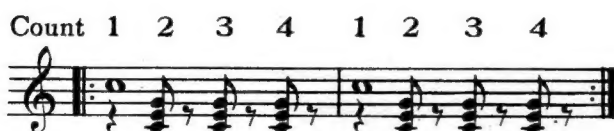
TONGUING ACCOMPANIMENTS

An accompaniment to a solo improves the musical value considerably. It is accomplished by the use of the tongue and is called Tonguing. Tonguing an accompaniment is performed by placing the tongue over the *lower three* of the four notes (or holes) to be played, leaving the top note in the 4th hole open, to Blow or Draw as the case may be.

Now, while blowing or drawing the single note, a chord or accompaniment can be produced by moving the tongue *off* and *on* the instrument.

Always play a single note first. Place the tongue on the instrument before you commence to play, then take it off and snap it back quickly and according to the rhythm of the music.

Play C in the 7th hole, covering the 4th, 5th and 6th holes with the tongue.

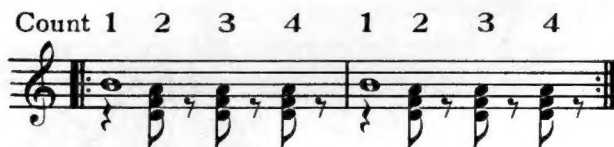


Tongue on off on off on off on on off on off on off on

Take a breath between the bars in this exercise.

Keep the top note C playing while you count slowly 1, 2, 3, 4. The accompaniment chord comes always on the after beat. Notice that the tongue is on during 1, but off at the count of 2, 3 and 4, and must be put on again between the counts.

Now, practise a Draw note with an accompaniment. Play B in the 7th hole and keep it sustained throughout the bar.



Tongue on off on off on off on on etc.

Keep the tongue on the instrument when single notes are being played; take it off for a chord. Always place the Harmonica well in the mouth, and keep it clear of the teeth as much as possible.

It is usual to play a three note chord accompaniment, but as the notes in the first hole would have to be written rather low under the stave, accompaniment chords are written in small type with only the two top notes of the chord shown. Always play **three** notes, however. The solo note must be sustained throughout each bar.

EXERCISE

Blow - Stems up
Draw - Stems down

Count 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Accomp. Accomp. Accomp. Accomp.

THE SCALE OF C WITH ACCOMPANIMENT

Common time

C D E F

Count 1 2 3 4

G A B C

C D E F G A B C

Waltz time

Count 1 2 3

CHIMING BELLS

A simple tune to practise tonguing accompaniment

March time

Holes 6 6 7 7 Blow and sustain 8 8 7 6 Draw 7 7 6

Count 2 3 4 1 2 & 3 & 4 & etc. Tongue Tongue

ANNIE LAURIE

Moderato

CARNIVAL DI VENICE

Allegretto

Count 6 1 2 3 4 5 6

MELODIE

WEBER

Allegretto

Count 1 2 3 4 5 6

Why not try a Chromatic Harmonica and increase the scope of your playing?
 Paxton Get "How to Play the Chromatic Harmonica," Price 1/6

EXERCISE

Keep the tongue on the Harmonica while playing the single notes.



THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME

Moderato



DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES

3 Note chords are written, but 4 notes can be played.



To be played with expression by the use of *Crescendo* and *Diminuendo*.
Try from the very beginning to put expression (feeling) into your music. That is where the beauty in music lies.

Crescendo - increasing in loudness.

Diminuendo - diminishing in tone, to softly.

MASSA'S IN THE COLD, COLD GROUND



BELLS

Moderato

Fine

D.C. to Fine

The musical score for 'BELLS' consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. It is marked 'Moderato'. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The second staff continues the melody and includes a 'Fine' marking. The third staff begins with a 'D.C. to Fine' instruction, indicating a double bar line and repeat sign. The music concludes with a final chord.

*Sustain throughout the bar.

THE HARP THAT ONCE

rall.

Tempo

rall.

The musical score for 'THE HARP THAT ONCE' consists of five staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff includes a 'rall.' (rallentando) marking. The fourth staff continues the melody. The fifth staff begins with a 'Tempo' marking, followed by a 'rall.' marking. The music concludes with a final chord.

JOHN PEEL

Allegro

AULD LANG SYNE



This Melody can also be played One Octave higher.

HOHNER

THE WORLD'S BEST

HARMONICAS

THE WORLD'S BEST

ECHO

**THE WORLD-FAMOUS BRAND
OF DIATONIC INSTRUMENTS**

AS PLAYED BY THE WORLD'S
LEADING HARMONICA BANDS